

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2415

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2013

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: ROSA COUTINHO URGES CREATION OF NEW SOCIALIST PARTY

SUMMARY: ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO, IN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH FRENCH PAPER, SUPPORTED CREATION OF A POLITICAL PARTY SITUATED BETWEEN SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES, WHICH WOULD SERVE AS REVOLUTIONARY PARTNER FOR AFM. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS INITIAL TALKS TOWARDS FORMATION OF SUCH A PARTY HAVE ALREADY BEEN HELD. COUTINHO ALSO STATED THAT SPINOLA WAS TRICKED INTO ABORTIVE COUP MARCH 11. END SUMMARY.

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1. LISBON'S AFTERNOON PAPER A CAPITAL, IN ITS APRIL 7 EDITION,

PUBLISHED EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW GRANTED LAST WEEK TO PARIS DAILY LIBERATION BY ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO, LEADING MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. MOST IMPORTANT POINTS FOLLOW:

2. NEED FOR A NEW POLITICAL PARTY:

ADMIRAL COUTINHO STATED THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS A NEW POLITICAL PARTY ENCOMPASSING THE POLITICAL FORCES CURRENTLY AIDING THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) AND SOME BUT NOT ALL OF THE PRESENT COALITION PARTIES. THIS NEW PARTY WOULD BE SITUATED BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AND WOULD BE A "CIVILIAN AFM," MEANING A PARTY WITH WHICH THE AFM COULD "EXCHANGE IDEAS, ANALYZE THE SITUATION, AND CONSTRUCT THE FUTURE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISM." COUTINHO SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THERE WERE TOO MANY PARTIES IN EXISTENCE, AND THAT ON THE WHOLE THESE PARTIES ARE "BLOCKING EVERYTHING" AND HINDERING THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS. THE PARTIES ARE TOO BUSY, CONTINUED COUTINHO, FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN LEADING THE REVOLUTION, AND THEREFORE THE AFM, EVEN THOUGH NOT EQUIPPED TO DO THE JOB, HAS BEEN FORCED TO BE THE "DETONATOR" OPENING THE SOCIALIST ROAD AHEAD.

3. MARCH 11 ABORTIVE COUP:

THE COUP HAD BEEN PLANNED SINCE NOVEMBER 1974, ACCORDING TO COUTINHO, AND PREPARATIONS WERE ACCELERATED WHEN THE SPINOLISTAS LEARNED THAT THE AFM INTENDED TO CREATE THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND INSTITUTIONALIZE THE AFM REGARDLESS OF THE ELECTORAL RESULTS. "FOR THEM IT WAS NOW OR NEVER." THE ADMIRAL WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE SPINOLISTAS WERE FOOLED BY A "BIG TRICK" THE DETAILS OF WHICH ARE STILL UNKNOWN EVEN TO THE AFM, MAKING IT VERY DIFFICULT TO UNRAVEL THE LINES OF THE COUP ATTEMPT. IN HIS OPINION THE SPINOLISTAS FELL FOR THE 'TRICK' BECAUSE BASICALLY THEY WANTED TO BELIEVE IN IT.

4. ECONOMIC DANGERS AHEAD:

THE PRINCIPAL DANGER AHEAD FOR THE REVOLUTION IS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO CONTROL THE ECONOMY AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SACRIFICES CALLED FOR WILL NOT BE MADE. "WHEN ONE MOVES FORWARD AS WE ARE DOING ONE KNOWS THAT FOREIGN AID CANNOT BE COUNTED ON, AND THAT THE COUNTRY MUST COUNT ONLY ON CONFIDENTIAL

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ITS INTERNAL FORCES."

5. DESIRE TO VISIT SOCIALIST COUNTRIES:

COUTINHO SAID HE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO OBSERVE HOW OTHERS ARE CONSTRUCTING SOCIALISM, AND WOULD ESPECIALLY LIKE TO VISIT PERU, CUBA, YUGOSLAVIA, AND ALGERIA. OTHERS EXPERIENCES IN BUILDING SOCIALISM CAN BE ADAPTED TO PORTUGUESE NECESSITIES, CLAIMED THE ADMIRAL, WHO STATED THAT A TRIP TO THESE COUNTRIES

WOULD GIVE HIM NEW IDEAS.

6. COMMENT: COUTINHO IS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MEN IN THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, AND IS OFTEN MENTIONED AS A FUTURE CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER. HE IS BELIEVED TO BE THE LEADER OF THAT FACTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND OF THE AFM WHICH IS BASICALLY OPPOSED TO TOO GREAT A RELIANCE BY THE AFM ON THE PCP AND ITS ALLIES, AND WHICH IN TERMS OF FOREIGN POLICY SUPPORTS A THIRD WORLD AND NOT AN EASTERN EUROPEAN ORIENTATION. HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS REPORTEDLY WOULD LIKE TO SEE A NON-COMMUNIST LEFTIST POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE PCP ON WHICH THE AFM CAN COUNT FOR SUPPORT. COUTINHO DISLIKES AND DISTRUSTS MARIO SOARES AND THE SOCIALISTS, AND HAS COMPLAINED THAT THEY ONLY CRITICIZE -- NOT SUPPORT -- THE AFM AND THE REVOLUTION. WE UNDERSTAND FROM SEDES SOURCES THAT INITIAL TALKS WERE HELD ON MARCH 15, BY A NUMBER OF NON-COMMUNIST SOCIALISTS, LED BY MES DISSIDENT CESAR DE OLIVEIRA, WITH A VIEW TOWARDS THE CREATION OF A NEW PARTY BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS. THE IDEA OF THIS GROUP IS TO CREATE A NEW PARTY AFTER THE ELECTIONS ON THE BASE OF MES DISSIDENTS, FSP, AND PARTS OF THE MDP/CDE AND THE SOCIALIST PARTY. THE NEW PARTY, WHOSE OFFICIAL ORGAN WILL BE THE NEW DAILY, JORNAL NOVO, MAY BE WHAT ROSA COUTINHO HAS IN MIND.

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